



State of Utah

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## UTAH STATE TAX COMMISSION

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## St. George man pleads guilty To Utah tax evasion charges

A Washington County man has pled guilty to attempted tax evasion, providing false or misleading information, and failure to make, render, sign, or verify state income tax returns.

Verd J. Erickson of St. George, who entered the plea after acknowledging his wrongdoing, has also paid \$79,800 in restitution to the State of Utah.

Judge Sheila McCleve of the Third District Court placed Mr. Erickson on probation for two years after suspending the one-year jail sentences, two years of which were to run consecutively. As a result of the plea agreement and disposition of his case, the defendant will be able to continue his dental practice.

Mr. Erickson had annual gross income of approximately \$160,000 to \$318,000, yet either filed no returns or remitted nothing on his income tax obligations, according to the Utah State Tax Commission.

Original charges filed on April 29, 2005, included five felony counts of failure to file tax returns and five felony counts of tax evasion. The parties agreed to the plea after Mr. Erickson agreed to full payment of taxes, penalty and interest for the criminal years.

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Mr. Erickson is required to pay regular monthly payments to the State in the amount of \$5,000 per month in addition to the \$79,000 already paid to the State Tax Commission. This will approximately double the total restitution paid the State of Utah. All of the restitution collected is earmarked for Utah public schools.

In addition to the restitution obligation, the defendant was also ordered to perform 200 community-service hours, file all past, current, and future returns, and register all motor and recreation vehicles with the State.

The Utah State Tax Commission's criminal unit in conjunction with the Utah Attorney General's office filed charges which indicate that while working as a successful health professional, Mr. Erickson eluded his tax obligations and responsibilities as a Utah citizen.

"Tax evaders are leaches on society. They bleed away resources from law abiding citizens and our schools," said Attorney General Mark Shurtleff

"We are gratified that this defendant has agreed to share the responsibility of all Utahns to help the State finance the education of our children," says Shurtleff. "By this plea agreement, the defendant can continue working in the community, the State gets restitution, and the schools receive their tax money. It is a positive resolution for all parties."

The Attorney General said that absent history of fraud and other compelling circumstances, the State strives to resolve matters that allow defendants to move on past the charges and continue their lives and their work.

"This is what is happening in this case and I believe it shows good faith and a desire for a positive resolution of the issues both on the part of the State and the defendant," Mr. Shurtleff added.

The State Tax Commission intends to vigorously prosecute those people who willfully ignore the law and fail to pay their fair share of taxes, said Charlie Roberts, spokesman for the commission.

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